

# Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

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Saturday, June 10, 2006

## Restive Mount

Scientists in the Philippines prepared Friday to fly over a volcano that spewed ash and steam this week, seeking to monitor changes in Mount Bulusan's 1,560-meter summit.



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## Lea Speaks

New mom Lea Salonga shares with Inquirer Entertainment the latest photos of her daughter Nicole Beverly Chien at two and a half weeks old.



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# Filipino community leaders recognized

By LIBERTY DONES  
REPORTER

Three distinguished members of the Filipino community in the CNMI will be recognized tomorrow for their outstanding leadership and invaluable contribution to the community.

The three awardees, chosen by the United Filipino Organization, the umbrella organization of 29 Filipino groups in the Commonwealth, are Nicolas B. Loste and Nelida B. Atalig as the 2006 Ama at Ina Awardees and Eli Arago as its 2006 Person of the Year.

"We are so proud to name

them as this year's awardees because they really deserve it. We recognize them for their great contribution. These people have exerted efforts to promote the welfare of the Filipino community here, to help their kababayans in times of need. Their great work is often hidden from the public, but this year we want to publicly acknowledge it," said UFO chairman Ed Reyes in an interview.

### Nick Loste

Loste, a certified public accountant who was employed as treasurer in charge to monitor and set up the accounting system in the Federated States of Micronesia during the Trust Territory



Nicolas B. Loste

period, was behind the petition that resulted in the establishment of the Philippine Consulate on Saipan in 1988.

He led a group of concerned Filipinos "who took the cudgels for a number of abused Filipino



Nelida B. Atalig

workers"—nightclub workers, waitresses, farmers, and construction workers—to advocate the opening of a Philippine consular office in the CNMI.

In 1987, as board chairman of the Filipino Association of the



Eli Arago

NMI, he began to send various resolutions to then president Corazon Aquino, Labor Secretary Franklin Drilon, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, lobbying for the consular office.

This finally materialized in 1988 when an investigating panel from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration visited the CNMI and announced the opening of the Consulate, now a Consulate-General.

Loste is also the prime mover behind the formation of the Halimuyak group in 1982, which spearheaded the move to grant some 300 Filipino members resident status in the CNMI under Public Law 5-11.

After a tough battle, the group was granted permanent residency in the CNMI by early 1985.

In 1986, Loste again formed Samba organization, composed

FILIPINO Page 2



Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo is shown, in this October 2005 file photo, receiving a plaque of appreciation from Joeten Kiyu Public Library director Kevin Latham for his help in building the library's Filipiniana collection.

A glimpse of the Philippines' storied past and way of life

By AGNES E. DONATO  
REPORTER

Year after year on June 12, Filipinos go out and mark Independence Day. Some observe the holiday in proper patriotic style, attending flag-raising ceremonies. Others celebrate the occa-

A GLIMPSE Page 2

## Filipinos hold Pistang Pinoy

Thousands of Filipinos and their families in the CNMI will hold the annual Pistang Pinoy at the Civic Center in Susupe in celebration of this year's 108th Philippine Independence.

Pistang Pinoy overall chairman Ed Reyes said the event covers the Independence Day activity, including the general assembly and traditional holding of the Filipino breakfast, which is usually done on June 12.

"We will not have any activity on June 12 at the Nauru building. It's the first time that we're holding it on June 11," said Reyes.

The Philippine Consulate General will continue to hold the annual vin d'honneur, a Filipino lunch gathering attended by local government officials

FILIPINOS Page 2



### DONATION CANS

Northern Marianas Bartender Association turns over the 14 Banya Mo Para Sa Mga Bata Project donation cans to PNB Foreign Exchange marketing manager Constantino F. Poble. The campaign is an ongoing project of ABS-CBN Foundation's "Bantay Bata 163."

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# PINOYNEWS

## Chess tournament tomorrow

To the islands' chess aficionados, here's a chance to go head-to-head once more on the ancient board of warfare called chess!

Come June 11, 2006, at no less than the Philippines Independence Day, the CNMI Chess Association will conduct a one-day Rapid and Blitz Chess Tourney to be held at Kilili Beach at precisely 0900H. There will be door prizes, surprise prizes, and tourney prizes to those who participate in these events.

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Morning - Rapid Chess ( 30 Minutes )
- Afternoon - Blitz ( 05 Minutes )
- Exhibitions Simultaneous games
- Evening - Award Ceremony

### USCF RULES APPLIES

### PRIZES

- 1st. Prize - \$ 100.00 and Chess Clock
- 2nd. Prize - \$ 50.00 and Chess Clock
- 3rd. Prize - \$ 25.00 and Chess Clock

Any suggestions, comments, or questions are welcome. This is a CNMI Chess Association and Yana Law Office sponsored event. (PR)

## FILIPINO

FROM PAGE 1

of Filipino permanent residents, to seek U.S. citizenship under the Covenant establishing the CNMI in political union with the U.S. under U.S. Public Law 94-241.

This petition proved again to be successful as all those Filipinos who were in the NMI on or before Jan. 1, 1974, were granted the citizenship.

Loste had formed several other organizations, implementing numerous projects for the benefit of the Filipino community in the CNMI.

He and his wife, Luz Lose, a retired teacher, have three grown children: Maribel, Gus, and Jude.

Gus is currently the president of the University of the Philippines Alumni Association-CNMI chapter.

### Nelida Bastir Atalig

She is truly deserving of the "Ina" award for being a mother to many displaced and runaway Filipinos in

the CNMI, providing them shelter, food, and transportation.

Atalig, widow of the late associate justice Pedro Atalig, has been an active member of UFO since the 1990s, having served as its president for two consecutive years, 2000 to 2001.

For five straight years up to now, Atalig also remains the president of Vizminda, one of the biggest Filipino groups in the CNMI.

A retired nursing staff from the Commonwealth Health Center, Atalig began the health screening project for Filipino overseas workers at the consulate office at the Nauru Building.

"She started this and up to now, this is being done. This is a great service to the Filipino community," said Reyes.

He said Atalig also walks the extra mile through her humanitarian service to countless Filipinos, who come to her for help.

"Her house is open to needy kababayans. She even donates money

to many. She would provide vehicles to workers who need to go to Labor. She would pick them up and drop them home," said Reyes.

Aside from this, Atalig is involved in many other socio-civic works in the community.

The recognition of the three awardees will be done at about 3pm during tomorrow's Pistang Pinoy that will be held at the Civic Center in Susupe.

### Eli Arago

Arago, vice president for Corporate Finance of Luen Thai Garment and general manager of Concorde Garment Manufacturing Corp., is known for his great generosity, compassion, and willingness to help people.

A person with humble beginnings, Arago has a soft heart toward the needy, endlessly giving his support, time, and money not only to his many relatives, but also friends and friends' friends.

Within the Filipino community, Arago has earned high respect for his

friendliness and sincere readiness to extend help.

His many contributions to various groups did not go unnoticed when he was nominated and awarded in 2000 as one of the Top 10 Outstanding Overseas Filipino Workers in the CNMI, a recognition spearheaded by the Philippine government.

This recognition of worthy deeds was further echoed when he was chosen as one of the Bagong Bayani awardees by the Philippine president that year. Arago received his award at the Malacañang Palace in Manila.

Except for the Filipino-American Lions Club, which he first joined during his early days on Saipan, Arago is not a member of any other Filipino organization due to his busy schedule, but is certainly welcomed with open arms by many who know him well.

"Eli is very humble. His donations are not recognized often but he is a very generous member of the Filipino community," said Reyes.

Arago hails from Batangas.

## FILIPINOS

FROM PAGE 1

and representatives from the local community. This event will take place at Fiesta Resort & Spa on June 12 itself. See complete schedule on Page 3 of *Maharlika*.

### General assembly at 7am

Headed by Philippine Consul

General Wilfredo DL Maximo and other consulate and labor officials, Filipinos will gather at the back of Marianas Business Plaza Building, formerly the Nauru Building, for the Independence Day ceremony on Sunday at 7am.

A ceremonial march by the Mason group and the raising of the Philippine flag begin at 7:30am.

Afterwards, United Filipino

Organization president Socorro Borja will deliver the opening remarks.

Reading of messages from the Philippine government will follow.

Maximo will read the 108th Independence Day message of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, while consul Belinda Ante will read the message of the Foreign Secretary.

Labor representative Joan Lourdes D. Lavilla will relay the

message of the Department of Labor and Employment Secretary.

The message of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administrator will be read by OWWA representative May D. Dait.

OWWA support group leader Fe Calixterio will deliver the closing remarks.

The early morning program is emceed by Rhodora "Dang" Bernabe.

The Filipino breakfast will follow at the ground floor of the building.

### Filipino groups' tent sales

Officers and members of more than 30 Filipino groups in the CNMI will hold their tent sales at the Civic Center in Susupe

the whole day tomorrow.

At the same time, Part II program of the celebration events, emceed by Butch Alinas and Minda Castro, will resume at about 10am at the Civic Center.

This will be attended by Consulate officials as well as Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, who will deliver an inspirational message.

Dubbed "Pistang Pinoy," it will showcase different booths selling products made in the Philippines, a wide array of food courtesy of the different restaurants, and exhibits by some commercial establishments to create a fiesta ambiance.

Genesis Choir will do an opening number.

A community "kapit-kamay" rendition of Bayan led by the

Genesis Choir will follow.

From 11am to 12noon, singing and dance competitions will be held. Entertainment and production numbers will take place beginning at 12 noon, with Tagpuan singers and Groove Band of Naked Fish.

Several other bands and performing groups will be featured in the afternoon. They include MAFEA band, the Tambayan band, Big Beats band, Jerry & and the Gigolos, and the W&V duet.

This year's Independence Day celebration's theme is "Pagkakaisa para sa Matatag na Republika."

"We want to highlight the concept of *pagkakaisa* or *pagsasama-sama*," Reyes said. (*Liberty Dones*)

Filipino universities.

Also notable is a volume on the Filipino-American War, published in 1998 in commemoration of the Philippines' 100 Independence Day. The book contains eyewitness accounts in 1900 of the Philippine Revolution, the Filipino-American War, and the U.S. occupation of the Philippines by French journalist Henri Turot and British observer Richard Brinsley.

A potentially contentious book is *The Vestiges of War: the Philippine-American War and the Aftermath* of an Imperial Dream—an anthology of essays, photographs, and poetry with an anti-U.S. imperialist premise.

Stories from the Japanese rule of the Philippines is told from a personal point of view in Pacita Pestano-Jacinto's *Living with the Enemy: A Diary of the Japanese Occupation*.

Several other books address more recent Philippine history. These include former senator Francisco Tatad's account of the downfall of former president Joseph Estrada, *A Nation on Fire: The Unmaking of Joseph Ejercito Estrada and the Remaking of Democracy in the*

Philippines.

The public library's collection also provides a peek at Philippine arts and literature. The Filipiniana section includes a volume on the centuries-old art of stoneware jar making; a 238-page illustrated book tracing the progress of dance in the Philippines from the Spanish era to the present; a collection of 50 timeless Filipino duets, and readings in Philippine cinema.

An array of creative works are also available, from the internationally published novels of F. Sionil Jose and the poetry of self-exiled communist leader Jose Ma. Sison, to the collection of "postmodern" essays by young writer Jessica Zafra.

Foreigners interested in living in the Philippines can get some insight from The X-Pat Files: *Backseat Views on Filipino Life* by Scott Garceau, a newspaper columnist living in the Philippines since 1995.

About 150 recipes of the Philippines' unofficial national food, adobo, can be found in Reynaldo Gamboa Alejandro and Nancy Reyes-Lumen's *The Adobo Book: Traditional and Jazzed Up Recipes Plus Essays, Trivia and Cooking Techniques*.

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# 108th Philippine Independence Day activities

June 11, 2006, 7am, Marianas Business Plaza grounds (former Nauru Building)

Theme: "Pagkakaisa Para Sa Matatag Na Republika"

7am: General assembly at the back of Marianas Business Plaza Building

## PART I

7:30am: Start of the ceremony

I. Invocation

II. Ceremonial March of Mason group led by Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo

III. Raising of the Philippine flag immediately after the March

IV. Opening Remarks: Ms. Socorro Borja, UFO President

V. Reading of Messages

□ Reading of the Independence Message of the President of the Republic of the Philippines by Consul General Wilfredo DL. Maximo

□ Reading of the Independence Day Message of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs by Consul Belinda M. Ante

□ Reading of the Independence Day Message of the

Secretary of Labor by Labor Representative Joan Lourdes D. Lavilla

□ Reading of the Independence Day Message of the OWWA Administrator by OWWA Representative Mary D. Dait

VI. Closing Remarks: Ms. Fe Calixterio, OWWA Support Group

**EMCEE:** Ms. Rhodora Bernabe

## PART II

Breakfast at the ground floor of Marianas Business Plaza

## Programme

### (PART II)

#### (Civic Center, Susupe)

9:45-11:00am: Welcome Remarks Hon. Wilfredo DL. Maximo (Philippine Consul General)

Invocation: Fr. Nonoy Recaido

Inspirational Message: Hon. Juan B. Tudela (Mayor of Saipan)

Opening Number: Genesis Choir

Community Song "Kapit Kamay" Bayan Ko (Led by Genesis Choir)

11:00-11:30am: Singing Competition

11:30-12:00pm: Cultural Dance Competition

Singkil - Bayani Dance Troupe Sayaw sa Bangko - CNMI Power

12:00-12:05pm: Sponsor acknowledgments and announcement

Pistang Pinoy Trivia 1

**EMCEES:** Butch Alinas & Minda Castro

## PART III

12:05-1:30pm: Entertainment Galore Glenda & Mario (Courtesy of Tagpuan)

Song: "Lipad na Pangarap" Basic Computer Class Batch 32

Grooveline Band (Courtesy of Naked Fish)

**Pistang Pinoy Trivia 2**

1:30pm: Parlor Games Ballroom & Latin Dance (Courtesy of Angel Int'l School of Dance)

1:35-2:00pm: Entertainment Galore Club Jama Angels (Courtesy of Club Jama)

2:00-2:30pm: Evolution Band (Courtesy of Tambayan)

John Ronald Arceaga

2nd Prize Winner of Family Fun Day

2:30-2:45pm: Acknowledgments and Announcement & Awarding of Certificates

Announcement of Winners:

(Singing & Dance Competition)

**Pistang Pinoy Trivia 3**

2:45-5:00pm: Entertainment Galore Magic Show (KOB)

MAFEA Band

Sound Track Band (Courtesy of Tambayan)

**Pistang Pinoy Trivia 4**

Big Beats Band (Courtesy of Godfathers Bar)

Jerry & The Gigolos

W & V Duet (Walden & Violy)

5:00pm: Closing Remarks

Ms. Belinda M. Ante, Philippine Consul

**EMCEES:** Annamae Adaza & Dr. Love



## TULOY ARAL AWARDEES

Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo, left, poses with the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration awardees, who were all recognized for their tremendous support for the Tuloy Aral Program. The awardees are, from left, Dang Bernabe, who recruited the most number of sponsors; Eli Arago, representing employees of Tan Holdings, which comprised the largest group of sponsors of the program; Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan, who represented the company's management, which had the most number of managerial employees who are sponsors; and Dr. Gabriel de Guzman of Pacific medical Center, who also helped recruit sponsors. De Guzman is also the volunteer doctor for the OWWA health screening. The awards were given out during the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

## LABOR FRONT

### Secondary employment

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE  
REPORTER

**Q: When an alien worker's secondary job gets approved, what is the starting date of his or her second employment contract?**

**A:** The approval of an alien worker's secondary employment will be deemed to have started on the date that the worker's employment contract with his or her primary employer began. But according to the Alien Labor Rules and Regulations, in no event shall the secondary employer owe the worker wages for any periods for which he or she did not actually perform services or labor for the secondary employer.

**Q: When is an approved secondary job for an alien worker considered void?**

**A:** The approval of secondary employment will be deemed void 15 days after the termination of the worker's employment with the primary employer unless the employee secures employment with a new primary employer or with a temporary work authorization. The approval of secondary employment shall not terminate if the employee has a basis to be legally in the CNMI (such as a new approved contract with a primary employer or TWA employer), but the approval of secondary employment cannot be the legal basis.

In such circumstances as the employee secures a new basis of primary employment, the approval of secondary employment will terminate upon its stated expiration date or the end of the TWA period or the end of the contract with the primary employer, whichever is earlier.

**Q: Can the primary and secondary employers enter into an agreement pertaining to any division of responsibilities of the employers?**

**A:** Yes. The employers may enter into a memorandum of agreement. The MOU may address subjects that include the division of responsibility for medical, board, lodging, repatriation expenses, scheduling agreements, or any other matters they choose to address regarding the nonresident worker and the secondary employer employment contract.

The Alien Rules and Regulations states that if the secondary employer undertakes obligations for medical, board, lodging, or repatriation benefits, the MOU must indicate that the primary employer will re-assume all obligations in the event the secondary employer's contract terminates prematurely. The primary employer may still hold the secondary employer liable for breach of contract in such circumstances. The worker who is the subject of the MOU must agree to its terms and sign it.

Submit questions on labor issues to *Saipan Tribune* via e-mail at editor@saipantribune.com, or by calling 235-6397, 235-2440, or 235-8747 and leaving a message at Ext. 133 or 135. You may also submit questions in person by writing it down and dropping it off at the *Saipan Tribune*'s office on the second floor of the CIC Centre on Beach Road, Garapan.



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# RP Congress OKs bill abolishing death penalty

By JIM GOMEZ  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—The Philippine Congress late Wednesday approved a bill abolishing the death penalty despite protests from relatives of crime victims, lawmakers said.

A bicameral committee approved a consolidated bill by the Senate and the House of Representatives calling for the repeal of a 1993 law that brought back capital punishment and a subsequent law that prescribed lethal injection as punishment, Rep.

Edcel Lagman said.

The approved bill will be sent to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo this week for signing into law, said Lagman, the deputy House majority leader. If capital punishment is finally abolished, the strongest legal punishment would be life imprisonment, according to lawmakers.

“Death penalty has no place in any country,” Lagman said, citing the absence of any scientific proof that capital punishment has deterred criminals in the country.

Lagman backed the death

penalty’s abolition despite the death of his brother—a prominent left-wing labor leader who was gunned down at a Manila university in 2001.

More than 1,200 death-row convicts, including at least 11 al-Qaida-linked militants, stand to benefit from the capital punishment’s removal, according to the Free Legal Assistance Group, an organization that provides free legal counsel to death row inmates.

Anti-crime crusaders immediately condemned the decision and announced they would hold

a protest on Tuesday. “This government is siding with criminals and not the victims,” said Dante Jimenez, leader of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, a prominent group of relatives of hundreds of victims of crime.

“Now, some victims of heinous crimes may resort to hired killers to get justice,” he warned.

Jimenez suspected Arroyo’s government was rushing to abolish the death penalty in an effort to please Pope Benedict XVI, whom she is expected to meet in a visit to the Vatican later this month.

Arroyo, who opposes capital punishment, said the death penalty’s abolition would not be a victory for criminals and pledged to continue cracking down on criminals. “Make no mistake about it, the abolition of the death penalty will be complemented by a stricter and sterner enforcement of the law in all fronts,” she said.

The 1987 Constitution abolished the death penalty, which dictator Ferdinand Marcos’ government used to execute about a dozen people convicted of rape and drug charges. Con-

gress, however, restored the death penalty in late 1993 for heinous crimes such as murder, child rape and kidnapping.

Seven people convicted of rape and robbery with killings had been executed under the current death penalty law.

During Marcos’ time, death row convicts were executed mostly by electric chair. But the country’s only electric chair facility was destroyed by lightning, prompting lawmakers to approve legislation prescribing lethal injection as the mode of execution.

## Scientists to fly over RP volcano

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—Scientists in the Philippines prepared Friday to fly over a volcano that spewed ash and steam this week, seeking to monitor changes in Mount Bulusan’s 1,560-meter (5,148-foot) summit, which they warned could spew dangerous lava.

No damage was reported in areas surrounding the mountain, 390 kilometer (240 miles) southeast of Manila, following the eruption Wednesday night—the fifth since March 21—and the volcano was quieter on Friday.

But government volcanologists warned of the “possibility of life threatening volcanic flows” because of an increase in the frequency and strength of Bulusan’s activity.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said in a statement it “expects more explosions to occur, considering past eruption episodes, which span from one to several months.”

It also warned residents to

avoid gullies, which lead to the middle and upper slopes, because they may contain hazardous volcanic mudslides called lahars and related volcanic flows.

The institute Wednesday raised the second of a five-stage alert for the volcano and the Office of Civil Defense said it distributed 1,000 face masks in the area and called in fire trucks to clear ash from roads. Traces of ash were reported as far as Sorsogon city, 20 kilometers (13 miles) north of Bulusan.

During the past 24 hours, the institute recorded two low frequency and one high frequency volcanic earthquakes, while a steam plume reached a maximum height of 200 meters (655 feet) before drifting.

The Philippines is in the Pacific “Ring of Fire,” where volcanic activity and earthquakes are common.

In June 1991, Mount Pinatubo in the northern Philippines exploded in one of the world’s biggest volcanic eruptions in the 20th century.

## Communist rebels kill soldier, wound another

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—Communist guerrillas clashed with army troops patrolling southeast of Manila on Wednesday, killing a soldier and wounding another in the latest flare-up of violence in the 37-year Marxist insurgency, a military official said.

Soldiers belonging to the army’s 76th Infantry Battalion encountered the undetermined number of New People’s Army guerrillas near the farming village of Pisipis in Quezon province’s Lopez town, setting off a one-hour gunbattle, Col. Romy Lustestica, an army brigade commander, said.

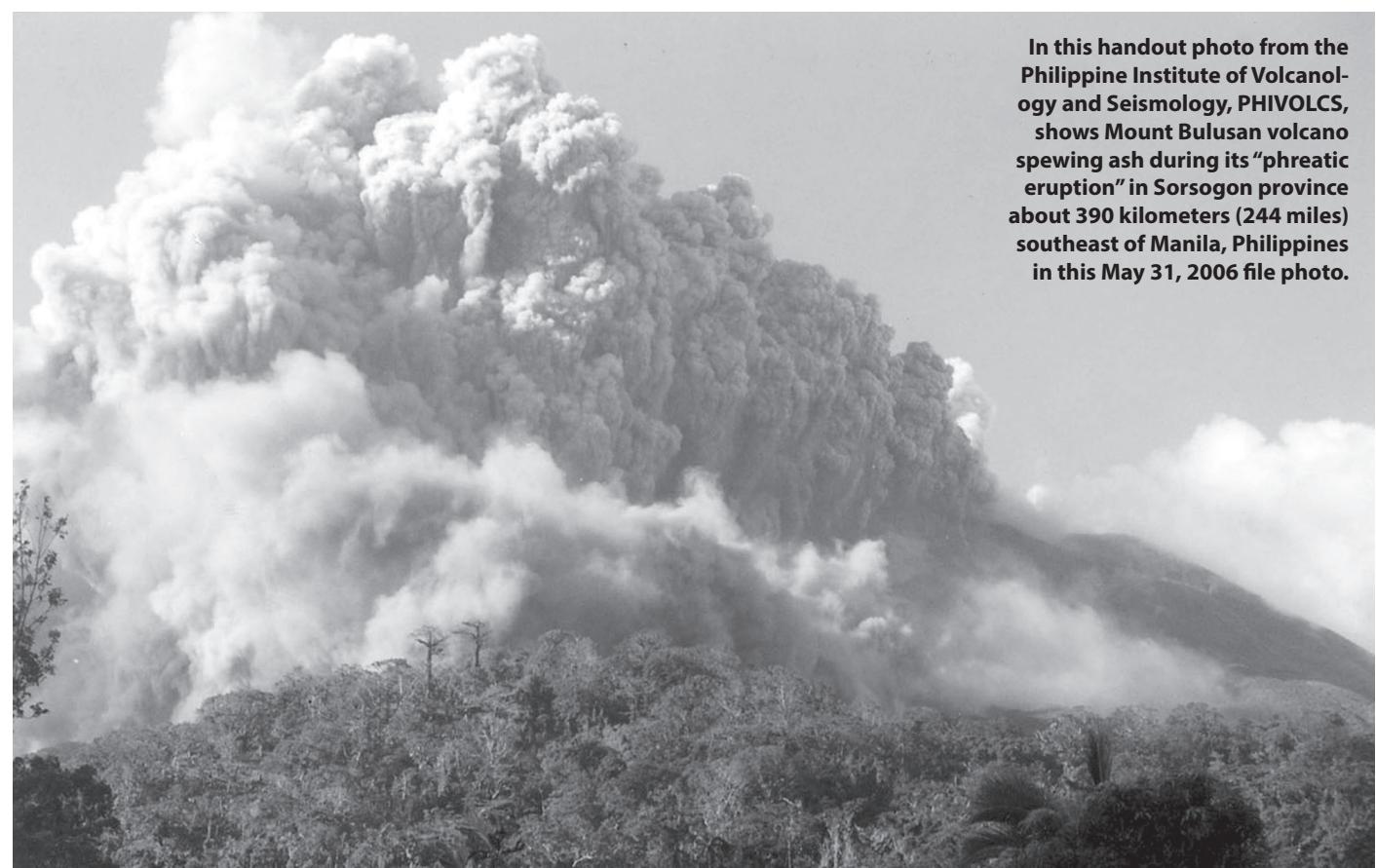
During the clash, soldiers saw three rebels fall to the ground and were dragged away by other guerrillas but it was not clear if they were wounded or fatally hit, Lustestica said.

The rebels split into small groups then retreated into a jungle in Lopez, about 170 kilometers (105 miles), he said.

The rebels, who are on a U.S. and European Union list of terrorist organizations, have escalated their attacks on military and police targets in recent months in an effort to capture badly needed firearms for recruits, police officials and rebels have said.

They have also vowed to intensify their revolt to help force from power President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who has faced calls for her to resign over vote-rigging and corruption allegations for a year.

The rebels suspended Norwegian-brokered peace talks with her government two years ago, mainly to protest its refusal to ask the United States and the European Union to remove them from terrorist blacklists.



## RP seeks to enlist Muslim rebels in fight vs al-Qaida

By JIM GOMEZ  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—The Philippine government wants to enlist the help of a Muslim rebel group to fight al-Qaida-linked guerrillas on violent Jolo island, a military official said Thursday.

The government and the Moro National Liberation Front has formed working groups to discuss a possible agreement under which rebels would pledge not to harbor Abu Sayyaf militants and help government forces battle them on Jolo, said marine Brig. Gen. Ben Dolorfino.

The MNLF used to be the largest Muslim group fighting

the government for a separate Islamic homeland in the southern Philippines until it dropped its secessionist goals, settled for limited autonomy and signed a peace agreement with Manila in 1996.

However, a large Jolo-based MNLF faction continued to hold their firearms and has periodically figured in deadly clashes with government troops. The faction, led by jailed Muslim rebel leader Nur Misuari, has been suspected in the past of supporting the Abu Sayyaf.

An MNLF leader on Jolo, Khabir Malik, said his group would welcome any negotiations that would better the lives of ordinary Filipinos, including Muslims in the south.

The MNLF has never struck any alliance with the Abu Sayyaf or bandit groups and it renounces terrorism, he said. “Anybody saying that the Abu Sayyaf can roam freely in our strongholds is a liar,” Malik told The Associated Press by telephone from Jolo.

The proposed accord is part of a government strategy to rout the Abu Sayyaf, believed to have about 200 men scattered near at least three Jolo towns. U.S.-backed military offensives have dealt major setbacks and kept the guerrillas on the run, preventing them from carrying attacks, security officials have said.

The agreement also seeks to prevent accidental clashes

between government troops and MNLF forces when soldiers are hunting down Abu Sayyaf members in Jolo’s hinterlands. Abu Sayyaf militants deliberately pass near MNLF lairs in the hope of provoking clashes between troops and MNLF forces, Dolorfino said.

The proposed agreement is similar to one forged by the government with another Muslim rebel group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, that created a joint government-rebel “action group” in 2004 and allowed both sides to exchange information and cooperate in pursuing the Abu Sayyaf and allied Indonesian militants in nearby Maguindanao province and outlying areas, he said.

## U.S. Embassy vows to cooperate in Manila rape trial of 4 Marines

By TERESA CEROJANO  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

**MANILA, Philippines** (AP)—The U.S. government on Thursday promised to cooperate with Philippine authorities in the trial of four Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman, but said the issue of diplomatic immunity prevented American Navy investigators from testifying.

Philippine prosecutors accused

the embassy of holding up the proceedings and Judge Benjamin Pozon on Thursday gave until next Wednesday to allow the witnesses to appear in court.

U.S. Naval Criminal Investigation Service agent Tony Ramos informed the court Thursday he was not authorized to testify on the investigation report, citing the “inviolability” of documents in the embassy archives under the 1961 Vienna Convention on

diplomatic relations.

But the judge threatened to hold him in contempt for refusing to testify and said he would ask the Foreign Affairs Department to clear up the situation.

Before the embassy invoked diplomatic immunity, another Navy investigator, Ronald Veltz, testified Monday that the driver of a van in which the alleged rape occurred Nov. 1 told him that the servicemen were

with the 22-year-old woman that night.

The embassy said in a statement that the Navy’s preliminary report was provided to the prosecutor, “however, there are issues of diplomatic immunity ... concerning the appearance and testimony of diplomatic personnel in court about which the U.S. Embassy and Department of Foreign Affairs are currently communicating.”

# Chinoy teener from Cebu wins reality TV show

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.  
INQUIRER

**C**hinese-Filipino Kimberly "Kim" Chiu of Cebu was declared the big winner of "Pinoy Big Brother's Teen Edition" during the finals held at the Aliw Theater late Saturday night.

Kim bested 13 other housemates in her month-long stay inside the Big Brother House, garnering a whopping 626,562 text votes or 41.4 percent of the total—twice that of her nearest rival Mikee Lee who only posted 313,032 votes or 20.7 percent.

Filipino-American Gerald Anderson of General Santos City placed third with 293,234 votes or 19.4 percent, while Clare Cabiguan of Bukidnon was fourth with 279,390 votes or 18.5 percent.

Kim's prizes include a condominium in Chateau Valenzuela, an adventure package, a four-year college scholarship from AMA Computer College and P1 million in cash.

Resplendent in a puffy white Larry Espinosa gown, Kim was also the crowd favorite in the 3,000-seater Aliw Theater. Her fans cheered her on, brandishing banners in support of the 16-year-old Cebuana and her "love team" partner Gerald.

Just what made Kim stand out from among the 14 housemates, who in turn were narrowed down from over 30,000 hopefuls that auditioned?

PBB director Lauren Dyogi said that it was Kim's natural charisma that endeared her to viewers. "She's wholesome and very pleasant. She laughs a lot. That was how she coped with the stress of their 42-day stay in the PBB house."

Kim reportedly told Randy Dellosa, resident psychologist of PBB, that she didn't have a clue. "I am just happy that my parents and siblings now see me in a different light. My sisters were surprised to learn that I could sing."

(ABS-CBN did not allow the win-

ners to be interviewed by anyone from the press until after their exclusive appearance on "The Buzz" yesterday at 4 p.m.)

Dyogi added that Kim had a wide fan base. "We cannot discount the large Chinese and Visayan votes. Also, a lot of Filipinos are fascinated with Chinese culture because of all the Asian telenovelas."

RUDY ESPERAS



**Chinese-Filipino lass Kimberly "Kim" Chiu greets her fans after winning the Pinoy Big Brother Teen Edition.**

In the end, Cebuano charm won the day.

"She also sings Chinese," Dyogi pointed out—almost as an afterthought, as if in response to the media critics who had dismissed previous PBB alumni as untalented.

## Women power

For the third straight time, woman power reigned on the ABS-CBN reality show after Kim topped the Teen Edition.

In the show's first season, Nene Tamayo emerged as big winner; in the Celebrity Edition, it was Keanna Reeves.

Just what is the significance of PBB's all-female lineup of winners? Is it a reflection of the Kapamilya network's largely female/family-oriented demographic?

Is it a validation of the supposed "matriarchal" nature of Philippine society?

More than a talent search, Dellosa believes the show serves as a "social experiment," a Rorschach Test if you will, in which "we can study how the public is reacting to people-watching."

It's not just an experiment in voyeurism, he said, but it can also be a study on the voting patterns of Filipino television viewers.

"If you read the PBB forum online, the reasons the viewers post for favoring certain housemates can be trivial," Dellosa points out. "It can range from something as shallow as good looks to as obvious as regional affiliation."

## Reformat

Dyogi also revealed that PBB was going to be reformatted into a talent search, called "Pinoy Dream Academy," in its next full (three-month) season in August.

This is probably the network's answer to "Philippine Idol," which premieres on ABC 5 in July.

"Pinoy Dream Academy is actually a separate franchise, also from Endemol, the same Dutch company behind Big Brother," Dyogi explained.

"In London, it's called 'Fame Academy.' In France, it's 'Star Academy.' In Spain and Italy, 'La Academia.' It's a lot like PBB in the sense that the students live together. But the difference is that they will be trained to be performers. Big Brother won't be around. Instead, there'll be a principal and different instructors who will give workshops on singing, dancing and other aspects of performance."

## RP 'Idol' vs 'PBB'

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.  
INQUIRER

Even the most uninterested viewers caught the implication: the next incarnation of ABS-CBN's "Pinoy Big Brother," dubbed "Pinoy Dream Academy," is going head to head against ABC 5's "Philippine Idol."

"Dream Academy" premieres in August; "RP Idol" in July.

Both are reality singing contests in which unknowns are housed together and undergo training and/or a makeover in front of the camera.

Both are foreign franchises. "Academy" is from the same Dutch company behind "PBB"; "RP Idol" is from FremantleMedia, based in the United Kingdom.

According to "PBB" director Lauren Dyogi, Endemol's show is called "Fame Academy" in the UK; "Star Academy" in France; "La Academia" in Italy and Spain.

"The housemates will be called students and they'll still live in the same house [on Mother Ignacia Avenue, Quezon City], but we'll modify it to include workshop and rehearsal areas, a recording studio, principal's office and teachers' lounge," Dyogi told Inquirer in a phone interview.

He added that "Dream Academy" will be aired nightly. "If 'Philippine Idol' is anything like 'American Idol' it will air only twice a week."

Perci Intalan, ABC 5's head of Creative and Entertainment Production, corrected Dyogi: "Philippine Idol" is also a nightly, prime time show.

## 'Why not?'

Clearly, "Dream Academy" is envisioned as a direct competitor of "RP Idol."

Dyogi said, "I don't see why we can't put up another reality-singing contest on air. The Philippines will never run out of talented performers."

Intalan seemed unruffled by the impending showdown. "It's really exciting. First, ABC 5 set the trend with the celebrity dance competition 'Shall We Dance' [ABS-CBN is also

coming out with its own celebrity dance contest "You Can Dance" in response]. Now, even before it premieres, 'Philippine Idol' is proving to be so popular that other networks are making big changes to their flagship shows. Ultimately, it's good for the viewers because they will have more options."

## End of war?

Interestingly, Intalan noted, two RP "Idol" judges (Pilita Corrales and Francis Magalona) are from GMA 7, while the third one (Ryan Cayabyab) and the host (Ryan Agoncillo) are from ABS-CBN.

Did he think "RP Idol" would lead to a ceasefire in the network wars?

Intalan quipped: "They are the best not only in the two networks, but in the entire entertainment industry. All three judges realize the enormity of their responsibility. They know that they need to produce an 'RP Idol' who can stand side by side with 'Idols' from all over the world."

Dyogi insisted that "Dream Factory" was not an exact copy of the ultra-successful Fremantle product. "Instead of judges or Big Brother," he said, "there'll be instructors and a principal. It's a global search. We'll also conduct auditions in Filipino communities in Australia, Dubai, Japan, Italy and the United States, through The Filipino Channel."

Dyogi admitted that reformatting "PBB" was part of a bigger game plan. "We want to give it a rest this year so viewers will miss it." He added, "PBB" is still evolving."

## 'Charity' program

Roberto Barreiro, ABC 5 managing director for TV Operations, Sales and Marketing, pointed out that, in the Philippines, "Big Brother" has "evolved from a naughty, almost soft-porn show (in Europe) into a charity, socially-relevant program."

Randy Dellosa, PBB resident psychologist, acknowledged that much, saying, "That was how we Filipinized the show."

# Light and love of Lea's life

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.  
INQUIRER

New mom Lea Salonga shares with Inquirer Entertainment the latest photos of her daughter Nicole Beverly Chien at two and a half weeks old.

Baby Nicole was born on May 16.

The e-mailed answers to our questionnaire came with an apology. "Sorry [for the delay]... but life's gotten a bit busy for us."

Still, the photos came with cute captions.

One blurb read: "Only two and half weeks old and posing already!"

Another showed a yawning Nicole with the one-liner: "Holy lungs... I know I've got the lungs for it!"

**What is it like being a mom? Is it everything you expected it to be?**

So far, it's wonderful, wonderful, wonderful being a mom! I'm loving

every single minute of it. It's tough, though, getting up to change or feed her when I'm severely sleep deprived, which is where Rob comes in. And he's been stellar.

My expectations of motherhood? My approach to everything is very practical and pragmatic. This was no exception. I didn't see motherhood as an experience that would complete me as a woman. I considered myself complete already. I wasn't going to put pressure on Nicole to be the completion of me. That wouldn't be fair to her. I want to set an example for her, that a woman should already be complete in herself before raising a family.

**How's Rob as dad? How's the new Iola (or Abu, which is how Ligaya Salonga prefers to be called)?**

The new daddy is wonderful... he's wonderful with Nicole. He changes the diapers and feeds her (with

bottled breast milk), cradles her and takes a gazillion pictures every day. Abu (my mom) is super excited, and enjoys being around her. She hasn't been able to baby-sit for an extended period of time yet.

## Have you figured out the feeding/diaper change routine?

Rob has been helping out tremendously. There are mornings when I have the hardest time waking up, so he takes over the diaper routine then brings her to me to nurse. When I'm up and about though, then I do as much as I can before turning in for the night. I breastfeed on demand, which means anything from every hour to every three to four hours.

## How do you feel when you look at your baby's face?

Extremely happy. She's the light and love of my life.



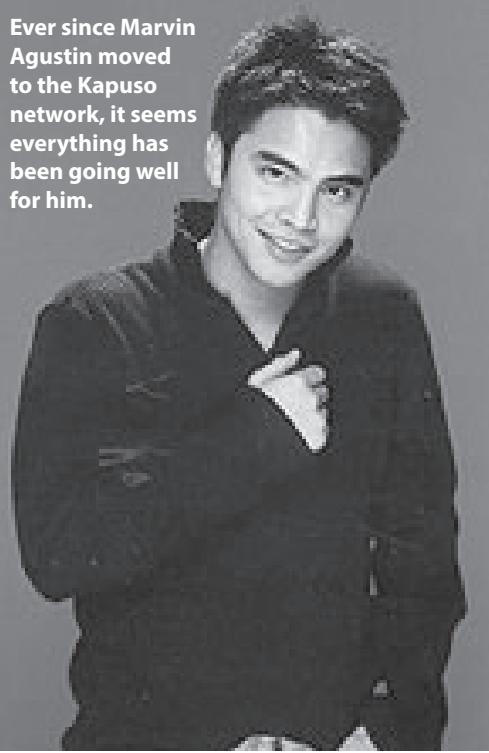
## What's her nickname?

We call her Nic. I've always liked boyish nicknames for girls. If we have another girl, chances are she'll have a boyish nickname, too.

## What convinced you to breastfeed?

I always knew that breastfeeding

was the best for babies, and I have many friends who made the same decision. Just knowing that every immunity I've had through my life will be passed on to her was something that helped me determine this mode of nourishing her. That, and the convenience... when we're together, her milk is ready, and at the right temperature.



**Ever since Marvin Agustin moved to the Kapuso network, it seems everything has been going well for him.**

# Everything's coming up roses for Marvin

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL  
INQUIRER

Ever since Marvin Agustin moved to the Kapuso network, it seems everything has been going well for him. Marvs has a top-rating TV series with Jolina Magdangal ("I Luv NY") which proves that their love team hasn't lost its magic.

And just like a wish that has come true, his dad has been set free from prison. We imagine it was a tearful and joyous reunion when Marvs let his dad carry his grandsons!

As for this new Kapuso's "puso," heard that the current apple of his

eye is half-Australian model Lani Pillinger. A condo neighbor of Lani's attests that she always sees Marvin there—sometimes bringing a huge bouquet of flowers. I teased Marvs about Lani. He just smiled and said "Bilib talaga ako sa radar mo!"

## Trading places

Tin-Tin Bersola-Babao and I have this running joke that we should trade places even for a day so I'll know what it's like to be a morning person and she'll get the feel of being a lunar-powered creature. In spite of our opposite lifestyle, we share a common joy—motherhood!

Tin happily told me that she and her lovable daughter Antonia have signed up as endorsers of Robby Rabbit, a Filipino-created cartoon character that has spawned a line of school bags, children's apparel, waterjugs and other collectible items.

Is she more of a mom or a wife? "A mother," she said. "I'm lucky that Julius is understanding and supportive."

## Just asking

Could it be true that Mariel Rodriguez and Zanjoe Marudo are really "on," but that they are keeping their romance hush-hush for the sake of

their careers? Are they wary that their love won't work if it gets in the way of their work? Or is it because they love their work too much? In show biz parlance, di ba kaya ni Mariel and Zanjoe career-in ang love?

## Secretly sweet

During Oro Entertainment's concert of Sheila Mae at Metro Bar, guest performers Sam Milby and Toni Gonzaga were not too chummy backstage. One production staff member said: "We expected them to be super sweet but they were not. Nabitin tuloy kami!"

Perhaps Toni and Sam would rather keep their sweetness private. When you show it all, love loses its mystery. No need for PDA, or Public Display of Affection, which usually turns into some sort of Pornographic Distraction and Attraction, anyway.

## 'Dokyus' both good & bland

By PAUL DAZA  
INQUIRER

ABC 5's weekly late show "Doky" has become a popular program among independent and documentary filmmakers. By presenting two Filipino-made documentaries every Thursday night to a passionate niche audience, "Doky" has become the only notable venue for works untainted by the mindless escapism we see in the TV landscape. In fact, many Pinoy indie filmmakers dream of having their works exhibited on the program.

Like any regular show, however, "Doky" has good episodes and bland ones. A recent feature about homosexuality turned out, surprisingly, to be dull and boring. After that, however, came a heart-breaking eye-opener about childless Americans who spend \$25,000 to adopt unwanted babies in China.

### Hit or miss

The series' hit-or-miss quality was once again obvious in the June 1 telecast, which featured two works shot in Cebu. "Isaw Bai? (Wantna Eat Isaw, Friend?)" was by three Filipinos who studied in the famed London International Film School. "Images Of Women In Cebuano Films," was the thesis project of Dianne Nicolas, a Mass Communications student in UP Cebu. Of the two, the latter was definitely more substantial.

Despite excellent image quality, a charming Cebuano music score and impressively clear audio, "Isaw" didn't feel much like a docu. Instead of thoroughly researching the subject and consulting culinary and cultural experts about the popularity of the Larsians dining haunt, all the filmmakers did was chat up customers and stall owners apparently during the same night. It felt more like a "One Night in Larsians" slice-of-life featurette.

Sure, it was mildly surprising to see an Australian and a Swede enjoying barbecued chicken and pork intestines; and yes, it's cute to ask a waitress if she's ever fallen in love with a customer. But shouldn't documentaries be more filling? At the end of the eight-minute featurette, we're told by a friend of the filmmakers that "Isaw" was a big hit when it was screened in London. An investigation into why that was so may have been more interesting to Pinoy viewers, who probably don't see eating isaw as a big deal.

Though not as technically polished, Dianne Nicolas' "Images Of Women in Cebuano Films" was a more enriching viewing experience. More than 25 minutes long, it used clips from more than 20 Cebuano movies and included the insights of more than a dozen filmmakers, academicians, and equal rights proponents. Using easy-to-follow narration and judicious editing, Nicolas succeeds in her two-fold objective of revealing the predictable and clichéd portrayal of females in Cebuano movies, and showing that Cebu used to have a thriving film industry. She tickles our minds with questions such as, "Why are single women always shown alone in their bedrooms?" and "Why is there invariably a scene in every Cebuano film where the mother is shown in the kitchen?"

RP cinema's future

Also thought-provoking are the contradictory statements made by two interviewees about the future of Philippine cinema. One man says tearjerkers that show women as victims will forever be a staple of movies; another says that all clichés and stereotypes must be discarded if cinema is to survive.

Dianne Nicolas' docu makes the viewer hope not only for the renaissance of Cebuano films and Filipino films in general, but also for the rise of more female Filipino filmmakers. Since it's obvious that she hopes to one day see a more realistic and accurate portrayal of females in local films, maybe she should put her obvious talent to good use and make a feature film, asap.

## Bading' bonding

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL  
INQUIRER

Regal Entertainment's "Manay Po" grossed a phenomenal P6 million on its first day.

So at the thanksgiving party thrown by Mother Lily at Imperial Palace, everybody was ribbing her, "Mother, bonus Money Po!" But over and beyond the amazing box-office returns, the movie is a triumph because it conveys what every gay person is aching to say.

Cherry Pie Picache, portraying a bewildered lisping mom, makes viewers laugh every time she opens her mouth.

Many people didn't think she could top her Chinese Bisaya character in "Ako Legal Wife" but that's exactly what she does in "Manay Po."

Even if the kissing scene of Polo Ravales and Luis Alandy was edited out, you can still feel the passion in their scenes as secret gay lovers. So "Brokeback!" Knowing each other like the back of their hand. Wanting to the point of giving the other the power to break your heart.

John Prats is truly convincing as a flamboyant gay that I almost forgot he's straight. Watching Jiro Manio in naughty scenes as a confused gay teen made me ask myself if he's the same cute lil' boy who made me cry in "Magnifico." His transformation is indeed magnifico po. Catch the blockbuster movie that's "Bading" bonding to the max!

### Christian experience

What makes Christian Vasquez so appealing is that he's a probinsiyano boy trapped inside a gorgeous hunk's body! Any woman would feel protected with him around and yet still feel the need to baby him whenever he sidles up to her with his malambing Ilonggo charms. No wonder Keanna Reeves is said to be very fond of Christian. They are starring in Seiko Films' "I Want To Be Happy."

I cornered him for the real score. "Keanna is a beautiful person inside out," he said, "but I haven't thought about courting her."

Does he go for "aggressive" types like her? "It's good to be the underdog sometimes," he admitted, laughing. Under, over and whatever position and proposition ... who would mind being 'baptized' the Christian V way?

### Heart of the matter

After being in the news for months due to many personal changes, Heart Evangelista is all set to pick up the pieces and move on. She says there are many things she wants to do, such as finishing her studies, doing another soap opera, recording another album and even auditioning for a role in an international film. Not to mention more product endorsements coming her way.

But one thing she'll never do, she says, is to pose on the covers of men's magazines. She has turned down all such offers. "I want to maintain my sweetheart image," she explains. "Actually, it's not just an image but a lifestyle. I'll go where God takes me."

Horror movies and kissing scenes are also a no-no. "I don't want to open the doors for negative stuff and evil vibes by being part of an anti-Christ film. Even if it was Jericho (Rosales, her boyfriend) that I had kissing scenes with in 'Panday,' I still felt violated 'cause so many people were watching on the set. Enough of that for me. I'm keeping it wholesome."

In Pinoy show biz, where being controversial is the name of the game, isn't Heart too good to be true?

"I want to be different. I'm sticking to my convictions," she says. "I can have good clean fun. I don't want to be caught in the usual vicious cycle. It's tough but it can be done."

Echo inspires her to do all that and more. "We are celebrating our first year together. I'm giving him a Louis Vuitton pen. He collects pens. I have no idea what his gift for me is but he told me it has a theme. I hope we can go ice skating together on our special day."

In spite of so many things on her agenda, Heart's heart has a ventricle reserved for Echo alone. Their love echoes in all corners of show biz and beyond!

### Glad dad

The script of Gary Valenciano's movie (with his two sons Paolo and Gabriel) has had to be revised. It's been a while since Mr. Pure Energy was last seen on the silver screen so he wants everything to be perfect. Just as Gary is so spirited onstage, he is in his element when he talks

about his kids.

"Paolo is graduating (Mass Media) this year. Gab wants to study music in the US. When I was Gab's age I was still with Kundirana but Gab is already a wiz on the piano and G5. Pao is deep and more of a rocker. Gab is the show biz type."

What advice does he give his boys? "To keep personal things personal. If you make everything public, you tend to lose yourself in this business." Their movie is about the ties between father and sons. On and off cam, fatherhood is never farthest from Gary V's heart and mind.

### Jolly Sarah

What will happen when two "giants" join forces within a telenovela? Viewers are in for a one-of-a-kind delight when Jollibee and ABS-CBN 2 tie up for "Bituing Walang Ningning" starting June 12. It's going to be sort of a reality show in the sense that Dorina (portrayed by Sarah Geronimo) will also become an endorser of the popular food chain as she auditions for a singing contest. For she's a jolly good girl 'ah?

### All for show

Don't be deceived by the closeness of Sugar and Edgar Allan, the Mr. Pogi winner in "Eat Bulaga." An insider told me that, backstage, the two hardly speak to each other. Artificial sweetness causes decay in love teams too. So maybe the "Eat Bulaga" tandem should do some brushing up.



Cherry Pie Picache, portraying a bewildered lisping mom, makes viewers laugh every time she opens her mouth.

## Tongue-tied

Over the past weeks, the debate on whether schools are better off teaching in English or Filipino (or any of the local languages) has arisen again. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, of course, has been going around arguing for English. That in fact was what she was doing as guest speaker of Cavite State University when Theresa Pangilinan heckled her in Filipino, shouting among others, "Patsalsikin si Gloria" ["Oust Gloria]. I don't know that Pangilinan was arguing for Filipino, but she has at least proven among many other things that Filipino is a most effective language for communication. Her point certainly was not lost on Arroyo, who has gone on to file a case against her for God-(or Arroyo)-knows-what.

I'd just like to add a few perspectives to show the complexity of the problem.

First off, the argument that reading and literacy have declined in this country as a result of falling English-language skills simply doesn't hold water. Everywhere in the world reading has declined as a result of stiff competition from other forms of media. TV and the PC in particular have pushed it back to the sea—although, between the two, I figure PC has done the lesser harm, being more interactive than TV. I personally think the PC itself can encourage rather than detract from reading once it goes past its status of supplying pithy "catalogue-type" information through the Internet. Who says you can't read books from the PC?

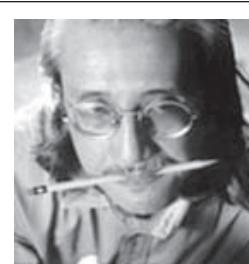
As to poor English affecting literacy, that's hogwash. My favorite example does not come from education, it comes from journalism, and specifically from my own personal experience. As I've learned from attending media forums abroad, we're the most illiterate among Asian countries in reading newspapers. At least to go by their circulation. Elsewhere in Asia, the circulations of newspapers run into millions. In this country, well,

the circulation of all our broadsheets doesn't come up to a million.

The reason for this is simply language. In the other Asian countries, the mass-circulation newspapers are in the local languages and are read quite literally by the masses. My Southeast Asian friends were bowled over when I answered their question about how big the biggest circulation newspaper in this country was, with "less than 300,000." In their countries, that is the circulation of fringe publications. The newspapers in their countries that do have a very small circulation are the ones in English, which cater only to an expatriate audience. As in many other things, we're the odd man out in this part of the world, our main newspapers, or broadsheets, being in English rather than in Filipino.

Theoretically, of course, the natural solution would be to shift to Filipino. But here's the part that makes the problem thorny. We're also the odd-man out of Asia in yet another respect, which is that while most of us speak Filipino, or can understand it, most of us as well read in English. Or at least the educated class does. That accounts for the phenomenon of TV programs, particularly news and talk shows, having converted nearly exclusively into Filipino and newspapers still using mainly English. Only the late night TV news is now in English, prime time is Filipino. Even provincial news often broadcasts in Filipino rather than in the local languages.

There have been several attempts in the past to put out broadsheets in Filipino but none of them has succeeded. Most Filipinos prefer to read them



### There's The Rub

By CONRAD DE QUIROS  
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

in English. Tabloids and entertainment publications are quite another matter entirely—they have commanded a fair share of audiences. But I'll get to that later.

The issue, it seems to me, resolves itself into this: Which is easier to do—to teach Filipinos to read and write in Filipino or to teach Filipinos to speak English, making it the language of ordinary discourse? I grant the first isn't easy, but the second is next to impossible. Creating an entire generation of English-speaking Filipinos even with the most robust or frenetic attempts to teach English in schools can't do that. And it would be the tail wagging the dog: it would be using education to teach people a language rather than using language, whichever is the most used, to educate a people.

The first choice in fact is not as hopeless as it

Mills and Boone in bookstore shelves, the novels written in Filipino outnumbered the ones written in English by six to one. The ones written in English at most had a circulation of 5,000, the ones in Filipino 30,000.

None of this is to say we shouldn't try to learn English with a passion. All this is to say we can—and should—make English a second language in this country, not the first one. The notion that we won't progress if we don't speak English like a native is nuts. Thais don't, and they're already a dragon, while Arroyo is still dreaming vainly of turning this country into an Enchanted Kingdom. The notion, moreover, that if we don't speak English fluently we won't be able to find work, particularly abroad, is even more nuts. It limits the national ambition to finding work and not creating it.

**The issue, it seems to me, resolves itself into this: Which is easier to do—to teach Filipinos to read and write in Filipino or to teach Filipinos to speak English, making it the language of ordinary discourse? I grant the first isn't easy, but the second is next to impossible.**

seems, however arduous the climb might seem at this point. The problem is not really that most Filipinos do not read in Filipino but that most Filipinos do not read "serious stuff" in Filipino. Filipino is associated with tabloid and entertainment. It does get read—but in that form. One remarkable statistic I've learned is that during the heyday of the local romantic novels, when they replaced

It's the difference between the Filipino graduate who asks his fellow graduate what kind of work he has found, and the Chinese-Filipino graduate who asks his fellow graduate what kind of business he has put up. People who think of putting up businesses do not worry what language they speak.

Their employees are busy trying to learn theirs.

## June began in May

When Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye inaugurated the present era of crisis with his two-CD presentation last year, he was actually ushering in the closing act of a performance that began in May 2001.

The Joseph Estrada administration, which had begun with a populist roar in 1998, ended with a whimper in January 2001. The Edsa People Power era—which began with an assassination in 1983, gloriously triumphed in 1986, then achieved a more modest revival (in terms of numbers and idealism) with the fall of Estrada—in turn quickly came to an end with the attempt to storm Malacañang in May 2001.

If Estrada's fall resulted in a great populist hangover—the masses could sweep aside all opposition to elect a president but could not keep him in power in the face of the determined "assault" of the middle- and upper-classes—the May 1 rebellion revealed how Civil Society networking, a legacy of the first Edsa People Power revolt, could make another, more limited Edsa uprising possible but could not keep a president safe, either. For both Estrada and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the military was the antidote to populism.

The two Edsa revolts pitted a new approach of political organizing and logistics management against the old, traditional, political kind. In 1986, Edsa People Power exposed the cheating and brought the people to the barricades; in 2001 it did the same—though

by then the Edsa People Power constituency, decimated by the destruction of the old middle class—had become much smaller.

Since numbers count in any kind of politics, the lack of numbers can only be compensated through the possession of arms. Thus the military serves as an antidote to populism.

The first and second Edsa uprisings actually proved that besides formal elections, people believe in democracy through plebiscites. Philippine leaders in the modern era have always known this. That was the reason Marcos

**The political genius of Marcos lay in his refusing to abide by any rules; the weakness of Estrada was that he gloried in breaking them. The weakness of the opponents of both men was that they were conditioned, culturally, to believing certain rules shouldn't be broken, and were horrified to see they were.**

gambled that even if held outside the formal requirements of law, any kind of raising of hands, so long as widely held and reported, was as good a means of establishing legitimacy as any. In 1981 and 1986, though, he did accept the need for formal elections, which he expected to ratify his leadership.

Since elections involve both large groups of people casting their ballots, professional politicians, from the late Marcos years to 1992, wrestled with the horrifying realization that the public was too vast, too independent-minded, and most of all, too unpredictable to manage in the old, tried-and-tested ways.

Ferdinand Marcos inaugurated trending and cheating by massaging the counting of votes—in addition to the traditional snatching of ballot boxes and forging of ballots. Ramon Mitra Jr. and Jose de Venecia both learned from Marcos: Building a network of leaders and a web of patronage and alliances wasn't enough. Too many allies just take the campaign doles only to stab the giver in the back.

And while Estrada proved that a popular candidate would be difficult to cheat, those supposedly in the know also learned that in a close race, the new way to play the game is to count the Marcos way—with Commission on Elections operators: If you can't bribe or frighten the public, make the votes academic.

If Marcos and Estrada, the alpha and omega of one political tradition, learned anything about democracy, it was all

negative: popularity isn't enough, and anyway, for many politicians, popularity is impossible to achieve; it's wasteful to stuff or snatch ballot boxes, it's more efficient to intervene in the counting at the provincial level; political machinery won't win you elections, but it's essential in presenting the perception of certain victory; and if all else fails, reach for the gun.

The political genius of Marcos lay in his refusing to abide by any rules; the weakness of Estrada was that he gloried in breaking them. The weakness of the opponents of both men was that they were conditioned, culturally, to believing certain rules shouldn't be broken, and were horrified to see they were.

The legacy of both leaders was, they eliminated, once and for all, the strong, unwritten confines of tradition which may not guarantee honest government but keeps it running relatively smoothly, avoiding turning it into a never-ending, limitless struggle for power.

The virtue of the old, pre-martial law era was that it defined how winners and losers behaved, guaranteeing some stability and peace between contests, and confining the vendetta to the provincial level. The defect of the present, post-Edsa People Power era has been to turn

vendetta into a political constant.

After experiencing 20 years of bad government and greed, the country could accept a vendetta against the Marcoses, except it was so badly managed its legacy is the absurdity of Good Government Commissioner Ricardo

Abcede dancing with Imelda Marcos. Of the fall of Estrada, who bungled himself out of a job, a similar vindictiveness was uncalled for. At the time, I said he'd proven that a leader is ruined when he's perceived to kick his opponents who are down. When he fell, his opponents kicked him as well.

It reenergized the masses; and the only thing between the masses and a prison cell for his successor turned out to be the military.

President Arroyo knew what a dangerous new world was born on May 1. That is why she briefly became a statesman when she announced she wouldn't run. And why her decision to run, after all, reduced Civil Society—which has been proven to be politically impotent—to merely another networking scheme that disguises the real political engineering taking place: the fusion of military operations with the manipulation of electoral results. Having embarked on that course, there is no turning back.



### The Long View

By MANUEL L. QUEZON III  
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

## SAMU'T SARI

# Migrant Workers Day honors OFWs

Overseas Filipino workers in the CNMI and in other parts of the globe were honored last week, June 3, during the annual Filipino Migrant Workers Day that was held at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.

The occasion showcased the varied talents of Filipino workers in the CNMI, who performed traditional Filipino dances and sang Filipino songs for their compatriots.

The event was also held as a graduation ceremony for the continuing education students of the Philippine Overseas Labor Office, the participants of which learned added skills to benefit them in the future.

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration also handed out awards to individuals and groups who supported its Tuloy Aral program. The program allows a sponsor to donate at

least \$100 for the education of children of former overseas Filipino workers. The donation covers the tuition and expenses for books and other school supplies of the student for a year. OWWA has partnered with the Philippine Overseas Labor Office and the Department of Social Welfare and Development to implement the program.

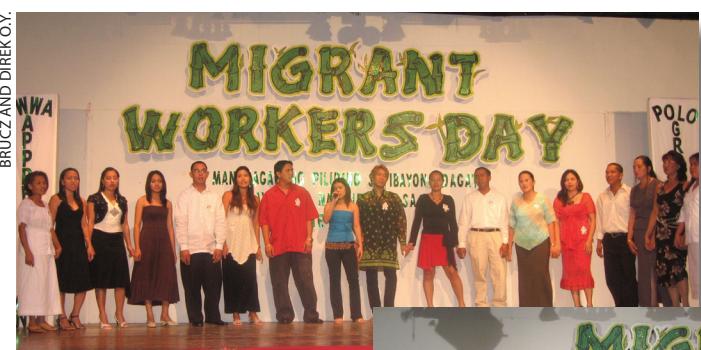
Among the awardees were Tan Holdings paralegal officer Dang Bernabe, who managed to recruit the most number of sponsors; Tan Holdings vice president for finance and administration Eli Arago, representing employees of Tan Holdings, which comprised the largest group of sponsors of the program; and Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan, who represented the company's management, which had the most number of managerial employees who are sponsors of the Tuloy Aral program.

(*J. Vallejera*)



**Singkil** dancers pose after their dance performance held during the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan. The celebration is a run-up to the observation of Philippine Independence Day on June 12.

Filipino nonresident workers perform a song number during the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.



Dancers perform an ethnic Filipino dance during the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.



A dramatic moment during the singkil performance at the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.



Dancers perform the Muslim dance singkil in a presentation held during the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.



The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration handed out awards to outstanding individuals and groups who made the most impact on the Tuloy Aral program. The office is shown here handing out the awards to Dang Bernabe, who managed to recruit the most number of sponsors; Eli Arago, representing employees of Tan Holdings, which comprised the largest group of sponsors of the program; and Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan, who represented the company's management, which had the most number of managerial employees who are sponsors of the Tuloy Aral program. The awards were given out during the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.



From left, Philippine consul Belinda Ante, Consul General Wilfredo Maximo, and Tan Holdings vice president for finance and administration Eli Arago pose for a souvenir photo during the Filipino Migrant Workers Day held last Saturday, June 3, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan.